

# CREATIVE DANCE FOR CHILDREN

**BARBARA METTLER**

TEACHING A SERIES  
OF INTRODUCTORY  
CLASSES AT  
MEADOWBROOK  
CAMP

BY **MARCIA EASTMAN**

METTLER STUDIOS  
BOX 4456, UNIV. STA.  
TUCSON, ARIZONA  
PRICE 82.00

# CREATIVE DANCE FOR CHILDREN

BY

MARCIA EASTMAN

PUBLISHED BY

METTLER STUDIOS

TUCSON, ARIZ.

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## FOREWORD

Although he would be surprised to hear it, Dr. Curt Sachs\* was the instigator of this little booklet. I doubt that he would remember the time when, many years ago, I sought him out at the New York Public Library to tell him about my experiments in free movement expression. He was emphatic in his insistence on the need for documentation of such experiments in a field which he considered worthy of serious research.

"Creative Dance for Children" by my student and assistant, Marcia Eastman, documents an actual teaching situation, which, like every lesson I have ever taught, was approached as an experiment.

The goal of my years of experimentation has been to discover increasingly effective ways of liberating creative movement impulses, and of cultivating the capacity for creative movement experience which I believe to be in every human being.

The classes at Meadowbrook Camp in the summer of 1952, described here, presented something of a challenge. Shortage of time was a serious handicap. Since I was to have only four lessons with each group, it was necessary to use a "survey approach", which meant sacrificing depth for breadth in presenting various areas of movement experience.

A class is a living organism which lives and breathes a life of its own according to the interaction of its three elements: students - teacher - material. It is impossible to reproduce its living substance through the written word, and any report necessarily lacks both the integrity of the teacher's material and the actuality of the students' experience. In addition to this, a class sometimes proceeds at such a lively pace that it is impossible for note-takers to record accurately all that goes on or to capture anything but a bare outline of the teacher's words. Perhaps for these reasons, it was as much of a shock to me to read this first written account of my teaching as it sometimes is to see oneself in a photograph, or in a motion picture for the first time.

It is to be expected that a student's first steps are clumsy and that beginning dance experiences are crude and diffuse, gradually coming into focus as time goes on. In working with new groups under pressure of time, a teacher too can be clumsy, as this report shows. I am convinced that those teachers who read this will learn just as much and perhaps more from those passages which describe my lack of success as from those which de-

\*Dr. Curt Sachs, musicologist and author of "World History of Dance", etc.

scribe the opposite. Although Marcia tactfully tries to find excuses for me, it is a principle of my teaching never to blame anything or anyone but the teacher if the class does not go well.

In order to help the reader understand this approach to dance, I am going to mention here some of its most important characteristics.

It is an approach which affirms dance as pure movement expression rather than as interpretation of drama or music. Every effort is made to stimulate the child's pure motor imagination, with auditory and visual experience subordinate. Contrary to much current opinion, children love pure movement.

It is an approach which cultivates dance as creative activity rather than as gymnastic technique or theatrical display.

Craftmanship in the use of movement as an expressive medium and the body as an expressive instrument is the goal of the work.

In the beginning, the major emphasis is on freedom of expression: freedom from arbitrary rules and fixed patterns, freedom to find one's own natural forms of expression according to one's individual nature. After freedom can come awareness, and after awareness, control.

The counterpart of free individual expression is creative group expression. A person who feels at home with himself can find his natural place in the group.

Improvisation, the most creative form of dance experience, constitutes the core of the study program. (Since these classes were given, I have completely abandoned all use of composition in favor of improvisation, both for children and adults on all levels of experience).

Relaxation, the counterpart of tension, is essential to creative movement experience and is practised continuously throughout every lesson.

The same basic material, with slight alterations, is used for all age groups, children and adults.

A student's honest effort receives only encouragement, never adverse criticism. The teacher does not try to improve the student's dance by changing its movements; rather, a new problem is given, designed to correct the inherent weakness.

The circle is used constantly as the most basic of all group positions.

Enjoyment of movement experience is the minimum requirement for the success of a creative dance class.

When the word feeling is used, it means movement feeling: feeling for the abstract quality of the movement enriched by generalized and diffuse emotional overtones. (It does not mean the experience of a specific emotion).

The rhythm of the class as a whole and of each exercise is derived from movement. It may be underlined by sounds of the voice, hand-clapping, drum, etc., but background music is never used.

In trying to evoke a movement experience for the students, the teacher uses various methods: describing the movement in words, demonstrating, doing it with the group, etc. In these lessons the drum was used only once (during the experience of alternating tension and relaxation) to intensify a feeling for the force pattern of the movement.

Problems in free expression (improvisation) and in basic movement (technique) are interwoven freely according to the needs of the group. A list of all problems given during the Meadowbrook lessons will be found at the end of the booklet.

Although I made use of Heather and Sandra as assistants and demonstrators to speed up the learning process, special helpers are not necessary. When time allows, it is even more desirable to select helpers from the student group.

These are introductory lessons and, after reading them, the logical question is "What next?" The answer: a deepening, clarifying and refining of the creative dance experience through continued systematic exploration of all areas of dance. For this the teacher needs thorough and well-organized teaching material. I am doing what I can to help fill this need by preparing written material, films and sound recordings, as well as by offering concentrated courses for teachers at my summer studio.

In conclusion, let me give my definition of "creative": To create means to make something new on earth that is unique and has never appeared before. How do we know that what we make is unique? It is unique if it is an honest expression of ourselves, because each one of us is unique on earth and there is no one else like us. To achieve a truly creative work, we must imbue that work with our individuality - our own unique pattern of action, feeling and thought. The more of ourselves we put into our work, the

more creative is the result. This is just as true of dishwashing and repairing an automobile as it is of making music and dance.

Barbara Mettler  
Rock Ridge Farm, Meredith, N.H.

September 17, 1954



## INTRODUCTION

One day in the summer of 1952, Mrs. Palmer, the director of Meadowbrook Camp, a girls' camp near Meredith, New Hampshire, came to talk to Barbara Mettler at her Rock Ridge Farm studio where summer school was in progress. One of Mrs. Palmer's staff, who was to have taught modern dance at the camp, was unable to come, and she desperately wanted her girls to have some dance experience this summer. Could Miss Mettler possibly come and teach some classes?

Since a group of us who were at the Studio that summer were interested in teaching, Barbara decided it would be a valuable part of our teacher-training course if we accompanied her as observers, taking notes on our observations and discussing each class together afterward. After the series of classes was concluded, these notes could be compiled and written up as a report. A division of labor was then agreed upon among us. I, as Barbara's assistant, was to take down Barbara's directions verbatim, except for some repetition of exercises, adding what other observations I had time to note and record. Alice Lynd, a nursery school teacher from Boston; Christine Lancaster, an elementary school teacher from Keene, New Hampshire; Felice Winkler, a social worker and group leader from New York City; and Lois Gaeta, a student at Mt. Holyoke College, were to write down their observations of the children's reactions. Our two teenage dance students interested in eventual teaching, Heather Barnes and Sandra Faxon, both from Massachusetts, were to assist Barbara in the classes when needed and take whatever notes they could in-between times.

So, twice a week for the next four weeks, the six of us and Barbara were off to Meadowbrook Camp in the Jeep station wagon, arriving back just in time for supper, bursting with comments and discussion of all we had seen and heard, sometimes to the exclusion of other dinner-table conversation.

Since that time, this narrative account of those classes has been gradually written up in spare moments when I was not teaching as Miss Mettler's assistant at the Boston Y.W.C.A., or touring with the Barbara Mettler Dance Group. It is based on material taken from every group member's notes as well as on my own memories of the experience.

The account of each individual class is in three main sections: first, an introduction setting the stage, as it were, and giving a feeling for the class mood, the weather, the place, and the incidents which took place before the actual beginning of the class; then, the main section which is the actual dance class--Barbara's directions and comments, plus the children's reactions; and last, a discussion based on Barbara's analysis for us after-

ward of what she had given, why she had given it, and how the class had reacted to it, as well as thoughts contributed by other group members and myself.

I hope that this account will be of value to those people--educators, parents and all others who are interested in creative art expression for children, and that it will be of specific help to dance teachers in providing teaching material and, more than that, a creative approach and philosophy of teaching dance. I also hope that it will be an enlightening and inspiring experience--as it was to those of us who, as Barbara Mettler's "teacher-trainees", sat and watched her teach these classes at Meadowbrook Camp.

Marcia Eastman

## THE OLDER GROUP

### Lesson I

As we drove into Meadowbrook Camp the first day, the director met us and guided us to the Lodge where the creative dance classes were to be held. The first floor of the Lodge, apparently the campers' indoor recreation space, was a large rustic room with four wooden pillars dividing the central space and a stone fireplace at one end. Scattered around the edges were a ping-pong table, a record player, and a piano, plus a variety of chairs and benches. The floor seemed fairly smooth although there were a few splintery places on it. Instead of a second floor, there was a balcony which ran around three walls of the room. Since the senior campers lived in small bedrooms off the balcony, their conversation, movements and laughter could be heard very clearly as they got ready for the class.

Today's group was to be the older group composed of more than thirty Seniors and Intermediates ranging in age from nine to sixteen. As they swarmed in, the director and the camp nurse organized them to discover which girls were missing. Barbara asked the girls to put their shoes and socks in an orderly row along the wall. As many were chewing gum, she told them to get rid of it since they were going to make all sorts of movements except jaw movements. Everybody was casual and at ease in the situation. They did not seem to anticipate it as something new, but rather as just another activity--something familiar to those who had had dance experience before, something scheduled for all. There seemed to be very little emphasis on the formality of a camp uniform here, most of them wearing bathing suits, some wearing shorts and T-shirts.

Since twenty-four of the campers were in the room and restlessly waiting for class to begin, Barbara decided to start the class even though about twelve were missing. These straggled in later during the class.

circle  
introduction

"Make a great big circle outside the posts... Let go of hands. At our studio we all call each other by our first names, so you may call me Barbara." She then introduces the members of our observing group who are seated at different points around the room taking notes. Barbara has the girls sit down and talk a little about dancing and about the kinds of dancing which they have had before, introducing creative dance as another kind of dancing.

"Find a place in the room not too close to the wall or to anyone else, and sit down... Lie down, and close your

relaxing,  
stretching,  
flopping,  
and exercises  
for separate  
body parts

eyes. Be soft, let your legs be soft, your arms wide, fingers and toes relaxed... Begin to do stretching movements, any that feel good. Stretch in every possible way." Giggles. The children's desire to stretch is strong, but some are not quite sure how to do it. Some kick and some make large movements without really stretching. Some are too crowded near the door because of latecomers, and Barbara rearranges these. "Let's do some more stretching movements. Twist, roll, tie yourself in knots." More giggles. "Now do flopping movements." Much giggling and a few oh's and ah's as they flop on the floor. "Everybody sit up. Now we are going to wake up all our muscles; we are going to do movements for each part of the body. Shoulders: up - down." Raising and dropping them. "Hands." Stretching the hands with the fingers wide and then clenching the fists. "Feet." Straightening the legs forward (they have been sitting with crossed legs or in any other way comfortable to them), and stretching the feet down then bending the feet back at the ankles. "Bend-stretch-bend-stretch". Then curling the toes under and turning the soles of the feet toward each other. "Now put your feet up in the air and shake them." Another girl comes in late. The girl next to her tells her to take her shoes and socks off with the superior air of one who has been fully initiated into the procedures of this class.

relaxed shaking,  
small knee  
bounce,  
jumping and  
swinging

"Stand up. Shake your right leg, throw it away. Shake, shake, shake, shake the left, shake right, shake left, shake right... Add a hop, shake your arms too... Turn around as you shake." The children are carried along by the rhythm and laugh with great enjoyment... "And rest. Stand with your feet straight ahead, make a good arch in your feet, let your arms hang at your sides. Keep the soles of your feet on the floor and bounce in your knees... Now I'll make a few suggestions." Barbara walks around the room helping some to get a better feeling for the movement. "Now let your heels come off the ground and up in the air, gradually coming into a jump." After a few jumps they go back to the plain knee bouncing and build it up into a jump again. After this, one child says, "I feel very bouncy." "Once more, keep your feet on the ground, bounce in your knees, let your arms flop with your knees... swing them forward and

backward: swing - swing - swing...make the swing still bigger, watch," she demonstrates. "All the way up in the air and all the way down to the floor," adding the body to the arm swing, "drop your head down, swing like a pendulum. We won't worry too much about how we do it today since it's the first time. All right, that's enough."

locomotion  
walking with  
various  
movement  
qualities

heavy

light

jerky

smooth

slow

fast

regular

"We are a big group and we are going to do a lot of group dancing. Our first group dance is to walk around the room without bumping into each other. Do a walk that feels good, a walk that you like to do, or that you feel like doing now." Giggling and talking back and forth among friends as they walk. "We don't walk just to get somewhere, we walk because it's fun. Each must find her own path, her own track...Now I'm going to give you different ways of walking. Walk with a feeling of heaviness." Most stamp their feet. There is a good group feeling among them; all are moving in the same direction around the room. "Now with a feeling of lightness." During the walking, many of the children look at us observers, some self-consciously, some smiling at us. Later on they become used to us as part of the scenery and pay no attention to our note-taking and watching. "Now do a jerky walk. Make it very jerky. When we are learning about dancing we like to exaggerate to get the feeling of it." There is quite a bit of looking to see how the older girls are doing it and to get their approval. "What is the opposite of jerky?" "Smooth". All right, now walk smoothly. Be very smooth...feel smooth inside. Now do a jerky walk again...now a smooth walk. Dance is the expression of feeling through rhythm; that is a jerky rhythm. Now walk as slowly as possible. If you are walking slowly with your feet, you shouldn't scratch your nose fast!" One girl using her whole left hand rubs her nose slowly and deliberately, laughing with two other companions. "Walk as fast as possible." Talking and giggling as they move. "We don't talk while we dance because we are learning to express ourselves through movement rather than words. Now do a medium, in-between walk...Can you walk with a very regular step? See if all of you can find the same regular beat. Let's feel it together. Listen to it on the floor." The children walk more heavily being very conscious of the sound, making the group rhythm heavier and more emphatic. "Now clap it as you walk...make it slower...faster...slower again."

big                   The whole group is really moving and feeling the pulse  
 little               together as it becomes slower and faster. "Walk with big  
 low                   steps." Some break into leaping. "You can't take really  
 high                  big steps if you have straight knees...Now take little  
                       steps, the smallest in the world...Now great big, huge  
                       ones again...One more way of walking: walk low, close  
                       to the ground". The little ones almost crawl, the tall-  
                       er ones stay up quite high. "Now walk high off the  
                       earth." Most of the arms go up and they are walking  
                       on tiptoes. "Now walk down low again."

skipping             "Now we are going to skip. Find your own pace in  
 forward,            skipping." After they establish a group pace, Barbara  
 backward,           claps it, chanting "skip-and-skip-and-skip." Some of  
 and in a            the children take up the chant spontaneously and Barbara  
 combination        encourages them all to say it with her. "Now walk back-  
 pattern             ward, looking over your left shoulder to make sure that  
                       you don't bump into anyone. Now, be careful, look  
                       where you are going, and skip backward. The less you  
                       talk, the more you can feel the movement, the more  
                       fun it will be and the more we will do." Skipping back-  
                       ward is a little beyond their group consciousness at  
                       this point, particularly in a crowded room, and many  
                       pile up. The backwardness seems strange to them and  
                       most avoid it by turning their entire trunks to the side  
                       and using their legs diagonally. "Now skip forward  
                       again...Skip backward...Now we are going to skip four  
                       skips forward and four skips backward. Let's clap it.  
                       Clap four times with both hands together and four times  
                       with your hands on your thighs." Some start to skip.  
                       "Don't skip yet, just clap to get the feeling of the skip."  
                       The children are clapping just with their hands. Their  
                       bodies are stiff and they have yet to learn to feel the  
                       pulse throughout their whole bodies as they clap. "Now  
                       skip in place while we clap...Don't clap any more, but  
                       skip four skips forward and four back...Everybody face  
                       front. Toward the fireplace. Take a partner, the per-  
                       son closest to you. It's better if it is somebody you  
                       don't see very much every day. Stand face to face, one  
                       with her back to me, one facing me. Take a moment to  
                       figure that out. Skip with four skips toward me and four  
                       skips away. While you are going in one direction you  
                       must think about changing the direction. Let's give our-  
                       selves an accompaniment by saying skip - skip - skip -  
                       skip."

relaxation  
in various  
positions

"Everybody spread out and sit on the floor. This is not a group dance but an individual dance so you need space around you. Lie down, not touching anyone, and just relax, keep quiet, close your eyes. Dancing has so much to do with movement that every once in a while we have to flop down and do no movement at all. Keep your eyes closed." The room is very quiet. "Roll over to your left side and find a loose, soft position. Some of you are too tight, find a position that is a little looser... Next find a position that is loose and soft lying on your face... On your right side find a position that is loose, soft and floppy. You may have to look for it a little, to discover it... In the sitting position be soft and loose, let everything just hang." Everybody seems to understand the feeling of "just hang".

creating sound  
patterns with  
hands and feet  
and moving to  
them

"Somebody make a sound pattern with her hands." one girl volunteers a pattern of four even beats. "Play it always the same way. Everybody close your eyes and move to it somehow--either with the whole body, or just a part... Now somebody else play another pattern. Would you try?" The girl chosen plays the same pattern as the previous one. "This seems to be a favorite one, let's all clap it. Keep on clapping it but in different ways. Clap it on the floor, on your thighs, try different ways. You could stand up and move around the room." The children are quite experimental. "Now everyone try to create a different pattern. This is mine." Barbara creates a pattern using her hands on the floor and the wall. "You can use the wall too. Find your own pattern in movement and sound." Many still stick to the pattern of four even beats, some do variations within that basic pulse, and a few branch out into other pulses. They all become interested in their own patterns and do them over and over again. "Let's hear some of the patterns... We don't have time to hear them all now, but you can play them to each other after supper."

trios using  
movement and  
sounds of  
hands and feet

"It would be nice today to have a little group dancing. Join up in groups of three with people that you don't know very well. It is very boring if you always stay with people you know very well. Now each group of three together find a movement where sound is a part of it. You are creating your own dance and your own accompani-

ment." Some start to move immediately, even before directions are completely given. Others stop and talk, trying to decide what pattern to do. Some watch while one does something. Some girls do nothing and watch what other groups are doing. Barbara moves from group to group encouraging them and seeing how the dances are progressing. "You are making a group dance all together, a dance that not any one of you could do alone. I know you haven't had much time to practise but show them as well as you can." They form a large circle and the dances are shown in the middle. They giggle when about to show their dances, or when finished, or when they think they have made a mistake, but most of them seem to feel proud of their dances. A few of the groups however, who apparently have wasted their time fooling or watching others, copy other groups.

whole class  
dances one  
trio's dance

One of the groups solves the problem in an especially interesting way, doing a clapping, jumping dance in a circle. Barbara takes that dance and has the whole group do it together, repeating the pattern four times to end the class with the whole group dancing together.

**DISCUSSION** There were two possible approaches in introducing the idea of creative dance to this new group. One approach would have been to emphasize that this was an entirely different kind of dancing from what they had ever had before. If the children had come with the resistant attitude of, "Why aren't we going to learn ballet steps?", this approach probably would have been the best to use to wipe the slate clean, saying that creative dance was something entirely different. However, Barbara felt that they came with the pleasant expectancy of a dance class, and so she introduced creative dance by saying in effect, "You've all had some kind of dancing; dancing is dancing, and we will just go on dancing."

Barbara felt that since she was only going to teach them for five weeks, (or four weeks as it later turned out), she must get into the richness of the material immediately rather than build slowly and go more deeply into one area at a time. Thus the pace of the presentation was quite fast and nothing was gone into very deeply in this lesson.

Through the directed exercises, they could see that there was a whole range of cultivated movement which would help them in daily life. Then, through the locomotion, the group glimpsed some of the various abstract elements of movement: a feeling of time--fastness, slowness; a feeling of force--



smoothness, jerkiness; and the spatial qualities of largeness, smallness, highness, lowness, forwardness, backwardness. She gave them the skipping pattern because she felt that they needed the discipline of an organized movement pattern, and after that she thoroughly relaxed them. She touched on the relationship of sound and movement by starting with sounds which had movement inherent in them--stamping, clapping, etc. Using this material, she gave them a group experience, first having them make dances in groups of three and then ending with the whole group doing one dance.

The group as a whole followed directions well considering the newness of the experience, and they responded readily to Barbara's voice as she guided them through the material. This particular group covered a wide age range and was a large group for that dancing space especially as it was broken up by the four pillars. The older girls seemed to feel self-conscious and awkward at times which prevented them and, by their influence, some of the younger girls, from exploring the various problems as deeply and seriously as they might have. Rather, they usually did what came easiest to them, whether the movement was natural or conventional or consisted of patterns derived from other dance sources.

As they danced, there was much laughter, giggling and conversing--about Barbara's similes, and at unfamiliar and uninhibited movements. This was partly stimulated by being among close friends. There were very strong friendships already developed as well as strong antipathies, and because the camp was small and informal, they all knew each other very well. Partly, of course, the laughter was due to embarrassment at feelings of awkwardness and not being in familiar territory. Some, however, was obviously laughter of enjoyment and delight in the movement itself and in the creative activity.

## THE YOUNGER GROUP

### Lesson I

This was to be the first lesson for the younger group, which consisted of about sixteen seven-and eight-year olds. Since it was a cool, sunny day, Barbara decided that it would be nice to have the class out-of-doors on a grassy plot of land at the side of the Lodge. The little girls were interested and excited, probably having heard reports on Tuesday's class from the older girls, and they swarmed around Barbara eagerly, volunteering remarks about the dancing they had had before. "I've had dancing before but it was ballet", and another one, "I've had tap". One little girl made a high kicking movement saying, "I want to do something like this".

circle

They begin the class by taking hands and making a circle. One of our group, who has been appointed gum collector, goes around with a piece of paper to those children who are chewing gum. Barbara says, "Let go of hands a moment. Everybody with me, arms over the head, look up, and stretch. Now drop your arms, hang heavy, loose all over, loose and heavy...Arms up again, expanding, up to the sky." Like most beginners, many do not stretch straight up but arch their backs and reach somewhat forward with their arms. "Do it again without me. Look up to the sky, stretch up...Next you are going to drop not just your arms but all the way down from the waist, and then slowly up again. Here we go, up, easy, easy, up to the sky...Now hang forward with your heads hanging. Quietly, no movement at all". The children seem to have trouble getting the floppy, loose feeling of hanging from the waist. Many arms are stiff and straight and some heads are raised stiffly, looking at Barbara. "Now straighten up, then arms up... and collapse again, loose, floppy, quiet, easy...and straighten up. This time we will drop all the way down like this," into a squatting-on-the-heels position, "and slowly stand up, arms up, reach way up...and drop down into a sitting position again." One of the little girls intentionally falls over backward in order to gain the group's attention. "But we are not going to fall over backward. This time up to the toes and drop again...Now go up and down all at once. Say 'up-down' as you do it... Now take it with a jump."

upward arm  
and body stretch  
combined with  
relaxed forward  
body drop

relaxed  
dropping from  
stretch into  
sitting on heels  
position,  
body forward

jumping up

"Sit down and put your legs forward and reach forward

sitting  
forward stretch  
and rebound,  
combined with  
relaxation  
lying all  
the way back

relaxation  
lying on backs,  
relaxed rolling

to your toes and relax back again. Let's do it together. Let's say 'forward-and-back'." The children are very absorbed and seem to enjoy chanting "forward-and-back" to emphasize the bouncy rhythm of the movement. It makes them feel the movement more as a process than as a position. "Now watch." Barbara demonstrates, reaching forward and then flopping all the way back onto her back. "Say 'stretch...and flop'. Stay flopped for a moment." They flop with their arms naturally flung wide and rolled out and are completely relaxed. "Keep your eyes closed so that the sun doesn't get in. Now you are going to slowly, slowly, slowly roll to your left side. Think about it a moment. Slowly, slowly, slowly roll to your left side and stay there a moment... Now roll onto your face and stay there, loose and soft... Keep on going to your other side... and onto your back. We are going to roll together and I am going to say, 'side, front, side, back, side, front, side, back'... Let's go the other way and let's go together because it feels so good to do it all together."

foot exercises:

stretching,  
bending,  
clenching,  
relaxing,  
with hands  
as well as feet,

semi-circle

shaking hands  
and feet to  
relax them.

hollow-round  
back

"Let's all sit up again. In dance we need our feet, so we are going to practise a lot with our feet. Now watch my feet and do just as I do--point the toes down, then bend the feet back... stretch and bend them. Make them move, make them work hard... This is the most important foot movement we can do: turn the toes under and make your feet look at each other." Everybody laughs. "Just like this. Do it with your hands--make fists, then make hands loose, now do hands and feet together. Now let's do this with our feet and hands." Toes curling under, soles of the feet facing each other, then a semi-circular stretching down and apart until the ankles bend back with the feet turned out. "Together and apart... Now shake your hands and feet. Shake your fingers just as if you had a bug on them and were shaking it off."

"Come into this position." On the hands and knees. "Your elbows should be springy, bouncy, not stiff." Springing in the elbows. "Now watch me, this is going to be fun. Hump up in the middle like this then down in the middle like this. We must make a bigger circle: scramble back a little because we are going to crawl in toward the center very slowly, walking along on nice,

different ways  
of walking:  
crawling forward,  
backward on  
hands and knees

on hands  
and feet

walking  
sitting down

relaxation

walking in  
lines with  
different leaders:  
one line

two lines

four lines

soft knees, soft hands...Now crawl backward." Even though it is more difficult, they do the backward crawl as well as they do the forward one. They are completely absorbed in following Barbara's directions with her, not trying to analyze which leg should go first, nor even trying to look behind them to see where they are going. The closing in and expanding of the circle is a total and compelling group experience for them. "We could crawl faster and faster." Because they are so much in the feeling of the movement they respond quickly to the changes of pace and direction and it is a very exciting group movement to watch. "Slowly in on four feet, soft feet, now carefully up onto our feet and hands...Lift one leg up in the air and then the other. Shake the leg in the air and now shake both feet up in the air a little bit." One of the girls tries a little experimenting while Barbara is explaining. "No, we are going to do this all together. It's much more fun than trying it by yourself. Now let's walk on our hands and feet: left, right. You know we are trying all different ways of walking. Can you walk sitting down?...Now can you stand on your hands and feet this way?" hips up off the ground, stomachs up, from a sitting position "and walk?"

"Flop down and get a good rest for a moment. Feel the nice wind cooling you off, nice warm sun, soft cool grass. Smell the wind, it smells good...Let's wake up...sit up...stand up. We have been walking in all sorts of ways except on our feet so now let's have the whole group, one right after the other, just walk. One person lead the line, the rest follow after in a nice walk anywhere the leader wants to go." There seems to be a feeling of uncertainty in the children and they hesitate as if waiting to be told where to go. They apparently are not used to making their own decisions in this group. "Just walk anywhere you want to go...Now let's divide the line. Will you lead another section? This section follows this leader and that section follows that leader. You are leading a whole lot of people, don't go too far away, come back soon." Two older girls in one of the lines tell a younger one leading the line where to go and push her gently in the direction they want her to go. "Now let's have four leaders, four little groups walking. Follow your leader." One group starts to wander off up

the path. Perhaps part of their confusion is due to the fact that, being outdoors,, there are no physical boundaries such as walls and they feel rather lost when moving on their own initiative in such a large and relatively undefined space.

individual  
free running

"Everybody come home again and take hands in a big circle. We just did some walking, now we are going to do some running." Pleased murmurs from the group. "We are not going to run to see how fast we can run and we aren't going to run to beat anybody, we are just going to run to feel springy. Can you clap as you run all together? Listen to it. Let's just stand still and clap a moment to see if we can make a clap song for our dance. Now everyone find a new way of running that we haven't done yet. Each one run in some very special way. Don't pay attention to anyone else." The whole group stands still and seems to be somewhat at a loss. As in the walking, this is apparently an unfamiliar approach, asking them to move the way they want to, to do something that they haven't been taught but must use their own imagination to discover. They wait for Barbara to tell them to start. One says, "I'm ready, go ahead.", and after some more encouraging from Barbara they start running and experimenting with different kinds of runs.

galloping  
around the  
outside of the  
circle alone

"I saw one that was a gallop. Let's all gallop. Sit down and one at a time gallop around the outside of the circle. Everybody will have a chance. We will all clap while you gallop around." They all have an easy, natural gallop, perhaps, because this camp is centered around horseback riding and all are familiar with the rhythm of a galloping horse. "Watch her." To the ones clapping. "See if you can get the feeling of her gallop. Watch her. Be right with her. Don't hurry. Very steady." Each one is so anxious for her turn that she squats on her heels ready to go the instant the girl before her returns. "Instead of one by one we are now going to have two by two gallop around the circle opposite each other." The game element dominates at this point, each trying to complete the circle first. The children are aware of their partners as people but they seem to have little sense of moving in relation to another's movements and often do not watch their partner to feel the rhythm together. "We are going to sing 'gallop-and-gallop-and-

galloping  
two together

relaxation

gallop' because our hands are tired. We still aren't together with the dancers so let's try our clapping again. Steady. Still steadier. Don't get faster." After all have had their turn, Barbara says, "Our hands are so tired. Lift them up in the air and shake them...and flop on your backs."

experiencing  
different  
qualities of  
movements  
seen around  
them

"We have been making quite a lot of sound with our hands, can you hear any other sound in the air?" One girl says, "the wind". "What kind of movement does that make you want to do? Lift your arms up in the air, moving them like the sound in the trees. Listen to it... Put your arms down again. Once more be quiet and listen with closed eyes... Come to a sitting position moving your whole body like the wind in the trees. Gradually come up to a standing position still moving like the wind." The movement from lying to sitting, or sitting to standing seems to demand so much attention from the children that they stop moving their arms expressively while they change position, resuming the quality they are trying to express as soon as they are in the new position. "Lie on your back. Can you see anything that is moving?" Answers: "the flag," "a cloud," "trees," "birds," "grass," "net on the tennis court across the path," "her hair." "Will you close your eyes and think about something which is moving, or you can look at it if you want to, and then move the way that it is moving. You will move just like that thing you saw moving... Sit up. Look at the flag. Move your arms just the way the flag is moving. It's a special kind of movement." One of the children who has stood very tensely with her left arm up behind her head and her face all screwed up when she wasn't dancing could be seen to relax at this point. As she begins to move like the flag, her face relaxes, she watches the flag, and, moving her whole arm, draws the right hand away from the left and in again, much as the wind pulls out and then rumples the flag, her whole body swaying with her arm. "Stand up and keep on moving. What kind of movement is it making? Wavy movements."

"Lie down on your backs and look at the cloud. Again, with your arms, move just the way the cloud moves. Would you say it is slow or fast movement?" "Slow".

expressing  
specific  
qualities  
of movement:  
slow  
fast  
soft  
hard

big  
  
little  
high

low

jerky

smooth

"Will you use everything, arms, legs, body, to move slowly." Child's question: "Can you stand up?" "Yes, stand up and everybody move as slowly as possible... Now, any movements you want, but you will move very fast." Some do arm swinging and jumping. "Once again, very slowly... Do you think the cloud is hard or soft?" Answer: "Soft". "Do you think you could move very softly? Try it." Some tiptoe. "What is the opposite of soft?" "Hard". "Move with a feeling of hardness." Most do stamping, skipping, strong leg movements. "Back to soft." Some do a slow, soft walk. "Is it a big or little cloud?" Answers: "A big one", "Tremendous". "Make great big movements anywhere you want to go, anything you want to do, just big. What's the opposite of big?" "Small". "Do little, tiny movements... Are clouds high or low?" "High". "Lie on your backs but, using your arms and hands, make high, high movements." One girl asks, "Can I use my legs?" "Yes, you can do that too... Now you are low, close to the ground, now make low movements. Try different low movements, close to the ground. I am giving you all different kinds of movement because that is what dancing means, expressing movements feelings. Now we are going to make jerky movements--arms, body, head, feet. What's the opposite of jerky?" "Smooth", "Make the smoothest movements you can possible make."

group dances  
choosing  
one quality  
of movement

"We have done quite a few different kinds of movement. What have we done? We've done slow, fast, hard, soft, big, little, high, low, jerky and smooth movements. Can you think of any other kinds of movement?" No new answers but variations such as "very, very fast". "Now we are going to get together in groups. There is a special way we do this in dancing: we look around for someone we don't know very well. Join up in groups of three. You are going to choose one kind of movement and you are going to dance that kind of movement together." "We've got one", "Is this a good-enough one?" "Can I do a backbend?". "Do movements that you haven't done before or haven't learned in a dance class. First of all choose a kind of movement, then try together to work out something that expresses that feeling. Tell me which one you choose. This is the first time that we have done this, so we have to explain it just a bit. Do you know what we are doing? It is called creative

dance. Can you say it?" "Creative dance". "It is called that because you create your own dances." Child's question: "What does 'create' mean?" "It means 'make up'--you 'make up' your own dances. So when you go off in little groups like this, you choose some feeling you want to express and then make up a movement that expresses that feeling. Pretty soon we'll show each other what we have." Some are not ready and say, "But we have to practise". "You haven't had much time to practise, but that doesn't matter. Who chose jerky? You three girls stand up and show what you have done." They stand up but are still verbally trying to decide what they are going to do, as are other groups while the dances are being shown. Since they have not had time to do more than agree on the specific quality and perhaps a few general ideas, they improvise freely with the feeling of jerkiness, shaking their hands, stamping their feet as they jump and hop. After all have shown their dances, the class is over and "Thank you very much" is taken up as a chant by the children.

**DISCUSSION** In this first lesson with the younger group, it was very exciting to watch Barbara capture the children's spontaneous enthusiasm and immediately channel it into expressive movement. The closer age-range of this group seemed to make the group more attentive, more deeply absorbed in the movement experiences than the previous group which included some very self-conscious teen-agers. Also, perhaps, the feeling of dancing outdoors in an open space added to the children's freedom, even though at times the sense of space seemed overpowering.

Barbara's use of the children's outdoor environment to stimulate a feeling for basic movement qualities made dance very much a part of their everyday life. In addition to knowing things through their eyes and ears, the children learned to know things by experiencing their movements sympathetically.

The success of this first lesson seemed to show that there can be a completely creative relationship between the teacher, the students, and the material right from the first lesson, if the teacher is skilled enough to create an enriching experience for the children which doesn't depend on their technical skill or familiarity with the situation. The material is basically the same for all ages, and it is only a matter of making it come to life by adapting the language to a younger or older age group.



## THE OLDER GROUP

### Lesson II

The older group seemed to be anticipating today's class with great interest. As soon as we pulled up in the front of the Lodge in the Jeep Station Wagon, one of them rang the bell and the others gathered around Barbara on the Lodge porch asking her many questions. Since the younger group had danced outdoors, and the day was sunny and cool, they wanted to dance outdoors too. Although quite a few straggled in late, there was much less confusion in getting the girls together. They all took off their shoes and socks without having to be told, except for one girl who seemed to feel that she should wear ballet slippers throughout the class.

circle,  
talking about  
creative dance

When it is time to begin, Barbara gathers them all together in a circle on the grass and talks to them, introducing the observing group again and explaining creative dance. "In creative dance you create, make up all your own dances. I am not going to teach you dances. Not only that, but you make up all your own accompaniments too. You can make accompaniments with your voice and with musical instruments. This week we are going to work just in movement, learning to move in all sorts of ways so that we can express anything we want to, using our bodies as our instruments. We will build from week to week, learning how to create."

complete  
relaxation,  
free movement  
of the whole  
body in a  
lying position

"Find a place for yourself where you have lots of room all around you but are near enough to hear me." They scatter widely and some of the older girls go off in a shady corner at too great a distance to have any group feeling, so Barbara has the group form two circles one inside the other. "Sit down on the ground. Now lie down in any way you want to but nice and loose. Everything as loose as it can be--wide and free. Begin to wake up your bodies by moving in different ways: stretching, twisting, limbering up. Do this with closed eyes and with a feeling of just moving in every possible way. Stretch, bend, twist, contract, expand." There is some giggling and social chatter going on among the older girls who seem to have difficulty still in putting their attention on the movements they are making enough to enjoy them. However, the younger ones in the group are now responding to Barbara more freely and moving in a very wholehearted way.

moving different  
parts of the body,  
one at a time,  
and then the  
whole body:  
head

shoulders

elbows

wrists

fingers

whole arm

whole upper body

lower body:

feet

lower leg

whole leg

whole body

"Now it grows even more interesting. Find a loose, comfortable sitting position. Close your eyes and don't open them again until I say so. See how many different ways you can move your heads... Try some more movements, different movements. Move those heads in every possible way. Let the head draw the body into the movement. Let the rest of the body follow. This is a head dance. Did you realize you could dance with just your head?" Some of the head movements are rather timid and restricted but become freer when the rest of the body is moved too. A few of the girls do not close their eyes but watch and laugh at each other's movements or look around to see if anyone is watching them. "Now you are going to dance with your shoulders. Make them move in all sorts of ways... Rest. We are going to take every little part of the body until we have the whole body dancing. This is an elbow dance, very elbowy, nothing but elbows everywhere. Elbows are angular. In creative dance we don't make only soft and pretty movements, although we do those too... Wrists are nice things to move, they can do all sorts of things, but it is impossible to feel the movement if you are talking." One girl makes her left hand into a fist, keeping the right hand open and curved as she moves her wrists. "Close your eyes and do a finger dance. Fingers can do things that nothing else can do... add the wrists to your finger movements... add your arms... add your shoulders... your head... dance with the whole upper body." Except for one small group which is still giggling and talking all the girls are quiet and absorbed in their individual exploration. "What a chance to dance in your own way! Don't waste time looking at anyone else. Now stand up and dance with the lower body. Start with the feet... move the lower leg too... now the whole leg. This is a leg dance. Not something you've learned, but something different, never seen on earth before." Some continue experimenting after Barbara says stop. "Now the most important part of the body, the trunk. Choose a position from where you can move your trunk--kneeling, sitting, standing--a dance for the trunk. Some of you are spoiling the others' fun by laughing and talking." One of the girls rolls, wriggles, twists, moving her trunk very actively, smiling as if she is enjoying completely every movement she makes. "Now stand up and move in every way with every part of the body

all at once. Dancing means movement and we want to see lots of it...Now we are going to create still more movement by going sometimes up in the air and sometimes down to the ground. Move with everything--head, arms, legs, trunk...This is individual dancing, so save your group dancing for later", as the children begin to be aware of their friends dancing around them. "All are going to move around this way," motioning in a circular, counter-clockwise direction, "moving all of the body up in the air, down on the ground, every possible way."

head duets

"Now we are going to do some group dancing. Will you take the partner who is nearest you." Some choose their best friend nearby, some dash across the lawn for their partner, and others stand still and alone, not moving until Barbara pairs them off. "This is going to be a 'duet' ", "Oh's" from the group, "for two heads. Decide what position you two are going to have; one can be standing, one sitting, or any way you want." The children show quite a lot of imagination in finding interesting positions: one girl lies down and the other sits on her chest, another girl sits on her partner's back, two are sitting back to back, one counselor is kneeling and the little girl who is her partner is standing facing her. "Work out some movements so that you can show them to the others. Be sure you are using your heads and moving them in some way together." Barbara walks around to the different groups, suggesting that some find a better position in which to move their heads, seeing how others are progressing. One girl asks, "Can we use our bodies too?" and Barbara answers, "You can use your whole bodies, with your heads. Keep on going, I see some nice dances growing. A dance just grows like a plant. Your dance should have a beginning and an end. Think about the beginning and about the end. Be sure it's a duet: a dance for two people. How many are ready?" Most are not, partly because many have started over again in another position and discarded their previous movements. "All right, work a little longer. You can use your whole body as long as the head is the most important part. Those are becoming very interesting. Keep on working." One duet tries arm movements, leg movements, and movements derived

from swimming and ballet, but seems not to be satisfied with any of them. They sit for a spell doing nothing, and finally get down to doing head movements, with one giving all the directions. This group continues to work while the other dances are being shown, and when it is their turn to show their dance, they begin with arm and leg lunges, then use head movements. Another couple which is finished ahead of time starts doing a foot and leg dance. "We are taking three steps in learning how to dance: first I told you to go off and improvise, next you formed couples and composed a dance, and now you are going to perform it. As one couple performs its dance, all are going to watch quietly. Form a circle with a dancing space in the middle. We are going to learn a lot by watching each other, so watch carefully. Each one of you watch just as if you were doing the dance yourself. We are going to applaud at the end of each dance." The first couple sits, each facing the other with legs apart, toes touching, heads and torsos bending and stretching back and forth. They giggle when their dance is nearly over and Barbara says, "Be sure you finish your dance. There were some very nice things about this dance. It had a beginning, and an end, but the audience clapped too soon. You should wait until they get up and walk away." The second two are on their knees and bend forward and sideward with their heads. "The thing that will be interesting about this performance is that no two will be alike." Another couple makes very jerky, rather fast movements, seems nervous and giggles all through the dance. "It is hard to get into a dance. We will learn to feel our dance movements so deeply that we won't laugh." In one duet, the two move very much in relation to each other. "That was especially good, heads like balls and then bumping into each other." Barbara comments on the next dance: "A fine feeling together, dancing like one person and the audience was dancing with them." The following duet moves with a great deal of feeling. Their heads roll backward, sideward, and forward very slowly as if drawn by some very sure and steady force. "I received such a strong feeling from that. It comes across to you if it's there." Another group moves well together but is trying hard to remember the movements mentally, counting them out rather than letting each movement grow naturally out of the previous one.

Some of the girls perform their dances in a very matter-of-fact manner, some as if they are showing off a gymnastic feat, some self-consciously and tensely, but many with relaxation, a deep enjoyment and pride in their creation, and a good feeling of getting together with their partner through movement. After all sixteen duets have been shown, Barbara says, "These were very nice dances and they were only the first ones you have made. You could make trios with arms, quartets with legs. You could dance by yourselves after supper or in between times."

locomotion:  
galloping and  
skipping and  
combinations

relaxation of  
legs by shaking,  
upward stretch  
and downward  
body drop

progressively  
relaxing until  
lying on the  
ground

"Stand up and come out into a big circle. We are going around this way in an easy, light, comfortable gallop...Some are skipping not galloping...Let's alternate a skip and a gallop...four skips and four gallops. Clap it first on hands and thighs. All right, now comfortably, easy, around and around because we are going to keep on doing it until we all get it. You can accompany yourselves. Say skip-skip-skip-skip-gallop-gallop-gallop...Go in the opposite direction, counter-clockwise, sing it as you go...Rest...Face the center of the circle. Shake out your right leg. Shake out your left leg. In a good standing position on two steady feet, raise your arms side-ward and upward, then drop your whole body forward and downward from the waist...Stretch up again and then breathe out and collapse, let the knees be loose too.... Slowly, back up to a standing position. Arms up again, look up, stretch up...Breathe out and collapse. Once more, this time we will go into a deep knee bend, dropping all the way down to our heels...Then onto our knees, heads down, arms down, everybody down, just lumps of earth on the ground. When I say 'go', you're going to roll over to your right side and relax and flop on your back on the ground...You did very nicely, the class was so much better today. That means that you are learning to understand more how to do it. Rest a few minutes quietly and that will be the end of class." Some of the children stay relaxed, lying down on the grass a while after class.

**DISCUSSION** The first lesson with this group was introductory, touching lightly on many areas: directed exercises, free improvisation, sound. In this second lesson Barbara picked up one theme, exploring the expressive movement of each separate body part, and through that threw light on various aspects of dance. She started with free movement of the whole body. After

having had that experience, moving just one part seemed easy and relaxing. In a sitting position the children moved parts of the upper body; standing, the lower body parts; in their chosen position, the trunk. They then moved all the parts together, the whole body, up in the air, down on the ground, from place to place. The head duets were a development of this problem into a group experience for them. Their experience progressed from a general feeling for total body movement to an awareness of the movement possibilities of specific body parts, back to an enriched awareness of the whole body, moving as a total of all the parts, moving through space and in relation to other moving bodies.

This problem, parts of the body, is best for a first creative problem because it breaks down all distinctions between technique and expression. It is a very restricted, limited, simple problem. Anyone can cope with it if it is presented simply and naturally. It also hits at the core of pure body movement as the means of expression: the completely abstract use of the body as an instrument.

At this point, this group of girls needed to be held down to one creative problem until they saw it through to a conclusion, in order to have a feeling of work accomplished at the end of the lesson and to reach greater depths of creative experience. In showing their studies they learned a great deal about concentration.

The performance took them right into a rather developed sense of the whole performance as a natural part of the whole dance experience having its own particular problems, performance as the sharing of one's dance experiences with others rather than as a means of showing off what one can do that others can't. Barbara had them applaud for every dance because she wanted it to be natural and not come suddenly forth when somebody did a backbend.

The group is coming along. Although, of course, as in any activity, some will enjoy it a great deal, some will take it or leave it, and some will probably be unmoved by the experience through to the end. Barbara felt that it was the movement material itself which held them, rather than any extraneous elements, that the material can be made so alive for them that both the teacher and the students are united in a common purpose, dancing.

She believes that the success of this teaching method in getting people to move freely and creatively even in the first classes is due to the objectivity of this approach. In other words, it is not you and your dancing that counts, but the movement you are making. Thus, putting the student's attention on the objective material, movement, helps to do away with his self-consciousness.

Another factor in the success of this approach is the emphasis on group movement experiences as a part of every class. The beginner finds release from his inhibiting self-consciousness by working with other people to create an enjoyable experience. There is always the joy of knowing, "We have done something and I have been a part of it" and the individual learns both to give of his own creativeness to the group and to accept others' different experiences, as well as giving and gaining moral support.

A third important factor is the emphasis throughout every class on relaxation: physical relaxation as a counterpart of tension in order to give the children a balanced diet of movement experiences, complete relaxation during rest periods to give the feeling of alternate rest and activity as a creative way of work, and also a relaxed, non-competitive class atmosphere in which every child can feel free to discover his own creative resources.

## THE YOUNGER GROUP

### Lesson II

We were greeted by hello's and smiles from the older girls when we passed them, driving up the path to the Lodge, and they told us that the younger girls were ready and waiting even though we were a little early. As soon as we got out of the car we were immediately surrounded by the group of laughing, talking children eager to begin the class. They helped Barbara learn some of their names and told her that they wanted very much to dance inside today since the sun was quite hot and they had already spent a lot of time outside. Barbara and the girls together explored both the inside and outside environments, deciding that indoors would be the best. Then, at Barbara's suggestion, they looked over the floor to be sure it was a good dancing floor, free of paper and anything sharp, and lined up their shoes neatly along the wall out of the way. The children seemed to enjoy the feeling of the floor after they had taken off their shoes, one remarking that, "It feels so good to go barefoot on the floor".

circle

The children are so eager to dance that before the class starts, several go skipping around the room. It takes a little while to get all the children organized into a circle in the center so that the class can begin. In making the circle, everyone wants to hold Barbara's hand but she tells some to help fill up the holes in the circle at various places.

relaxation

"Sit down on the floor. Now we are going to move back a little and lie down on the floor with everything very soft. You are going to close your eyes for a minute, uncross your legs and let everything be loose. We will wait until it is all quiet. We can't dance until everything is quiet...Now move around in any way that feels good. Stretch...twist...bend. Then make yourself all loose again and rest quietly...Move again with some movements that feel good. This feels like waking up in the morning: stretching, bending, twisting."

free movement  
for the whole  
body on the floor

"We were moving the whole body, but now we have to take the body apart. Sit in an easy position where you can move freely. It is extremely important for you all to close your eyes. We can't go on until all eyes are closed lightly. Now see how many different ways you can move your head. Try out different ways. Try moving your head backward, forward, turning it...Now let the head pull the



exploring the  
movement of  
separate body  
parts and  
combinations  
of parts:  
head

shoulders

elbows

wrists

fingers

whole arm,

whole upper body

toes

ankles

whole leg

trunk

whole body around in different kinds of movement." One girl shakes her head as hard as a child saying no, no, no, her lips pursed, her face screwed up. Another, who before has fallen back on familiar, previously learned dance patterns, lets the movements of her head lead her into very new and deeply felt movements throughout her body. "Let's see the head dancing, taking the rest of the body with it into movements you have never done before in your life, which feel good. You would be surprised at the ways different parts of the body can move. Now move your shoulders in every possible way. No two will do it alike. Your shoulders aren't like anyone else's... Elbows can do things that no other part of the body can do. Elbows feel different, dancing has to do with feeling. Feel those elbows." The children seem to have a good feeling for elbows, moving them sometimes apart and together and making sharp movements with them. "Wrists have a nice feeling as they move... Now fingers. All ten fingers dancing in many ways. This is a finger dance." By now everyone in the group is moving with a great deal of movement feeling. "It is important not to look at anyone else." Some of the girls are still looking to see how others are moving, probably partly out of curiosity and partly because the feeling of all moving with the same body part gives them reassurance to go on with their own movements. "Try out all different things with fingers and wrists. Now the elbows too... shoulders... whole arm... head... whole upper body. Lie down again with everything easy and loose, not tight. Lie on your back with your legs up in the air loosely. See how many different ways you can move your toes and ankles. Experiment with toes. Make them wiggle, spread them, put them together. Now move the whole leg... Sit up... Stand up. Now dance with your legs and feet, but standing. Now with the legs going up in the air. Feet doing things. Legs dancing all around... There is a part of the body which we haven't mentioned yet--the trunk. Decide for yourself whether you want to be lying, sitting, or standing to move your trunk." One child asks what "trunk" means and Barbara answers, "like the trunk of a tree. Without arms and legs." The idea of moving the trunk seems somewhat puzzling. Some stand and watch others who try moving their hips or their shoulders. "Now this is a dance for hands and feet." There seems

combinations:  
hands and feet,  
elbows and knees

whole body

to be more consciousness of feet. "Another dance for elbows and knees...one for fingers and toes." One child wiggles both fingers and toes. "Shoulders and hips...arms and legs...one arm and one leg...Now dance with the whole body. Dance with everything; head, arms, legs, feet, fingers and toes, trunk... Rest."

each choosing  
a part of the  
body she likes  
to dance with

"Will you all come together in a circle and take hands. Help each other to make a good circle...not by having tight arms and pulling each other. Make an easy, soft circle. Drop hands. Now each one by herself is going to have a chance to choose which part of the body she is going to dance with and we are going to watch."

Sally: legs (jumping apart and together)

Nancy: whole body (floppy arm and leg movements)

Kathy: fingers (crinkly, curling movements with the fingers, great concentration on the feeling of them.)

Linda: whole body (lots of movement). Barbara says,

"We will learn to be a good audience and feel what she is feeling with her. If you are really watching you will want to do it too."

Marion: fingers

Barbara: legs (hopping from one foot to the other with kicking movements)

Lorna: whole body (mostly arm and leg movement)

Linda: feet (kicking forward with feet bent)

Edwina: feet

Gigi: whole body (cartwheel)

Michael: everything but legs (she does move her legs some but puts her attention mostly on the upper body)

Susan: feet (kicking foot dance. She has some jacks in her pocket which jingle as she jumps up and down.

Barbara says that they make a very nice dance accompaniment.)

Yvonne: feet (done sitting down with lots of movement of toes, feet and legs.)

head duets

"We are not going to do any more dancing alone now. We are going to do some group dancing and the smallest group is two people. Will you find a partner." As the children start to dart in many directions for favorite friends, Barbara stops them. "Go back where you came from, you are not doing it right." She pairs them off.

"In this dancing you have new partners all the time. Now we are going to have a duet for two people for heads. Decide how you are going to be--sitting, standing, lying down, lying face to face, back to back, any way you want to. Some comfortable position." The children anticipate directions, and Barbara has to speak many times to keep them from going ahead until she has finished giving her directions. "If you have a position, go ahead." One girl asks if she can use her arms. "Well, mostly head." Some of the children watch Barbara as she goes around instead of working on their own dances, but most of them start right to work even before Barbara has finished talking. "I hope you have worked hard so that you have something to show. We are going to sit up while we watch each other and we are going to forget about planning our own dances while we watch the others."

The first two start with both lying back to back, their heads together. Then they move their heads back and forth on the floor with a sweeping motion. The second group start sitting on their heels, side by side, bouncing their heads forward, sideward and backward. The third couple stand face to face holding hands, their heads swaying first to one side, then to the other, then the foreheads bumping. In the fourth duet, one girl decides to stand and the other to lie on her back while they move their heads in the same direction at the same time. Some of the other couples choose positions lying side by side on their backs, or lying on their sides facing each other.

two arm trios  
and two  
arm quartets

After all the duets are shown, Barbara asks them to form two groups of three and two groups of four, trying to find people they have not yet danced with today. "When three dance together it is called a 'trio'. When four dance it is called a 'quartet'. You are going to dance with your arms. Find, first of all, a good position to start from. All must want the same position and be happy about it. Be sure that it is an arm dance. It is important to make up your own movements and not do movements that you have already learned somewhere. When you make a group dance it is necessary that every one in the group help decide what to do. Don't push anyone around. Let everyone have a chance to do what she wants to do. Be sure it has a beginning and that we know when it is the

end. We should know 'now the dance is over'. Let's have everyone show her dance right where she is." One girl wants very much to have the dances shown in the middle of a circle. Barbara agrees and they quickly form a circle with the dancing space in the middle of it. "Let's have a smaller group first." The first trio does some twisting arm movements but the children stop in the middle of it, not remembering how they had planned to finish it. After some hesitation they improvise a new ending. The second group, a quartet, sit on the floor in a square with their feet in toward the center as they sweep their arms, brushing them on the floor. The next trio stand back to back holding hands. They twist in and out underneath their arms pulling each other through in a kind of "grapevine twist". They are very pleased when they manage to end up untwisted and one girl says, "We didn't even know if we could get back where we were!" The last dance, a quartet, has decided to start with two standing and two sitting with their legs apart. They do sweeping, swinging movements with their arms which make a sound pattern, brushing sometimes on the floor, sometimes silently in the air. They get so much enjoyment from the movement and sound pattern which they have created that they keep repeating it over and over. "That dance didn't want to end, it went on and on. It would be fun for all of us to do one dance together. Let's have the first quartet do their dance over and over in the center and all of us do the same movements in the circle."

complete  
relaxation  
on the floor

"Rest a moment. Lie down, flop. This is the way we rest: We close our eyes and lie on our backs with our arms and legs wide. Be sure you aren't touching anyone. Your arms and legs are flat on the floor, eyes closed, everything quiet. In dance class we have to have times when everything is quiet and there is no movement. Arms wider. Rest your faces. Lips open, eyelids droopy. It makes you feel very loose and relaxed. The more you rest now the more you can dance later. Everything soft."

experiencing  
tension to learn  
what relaxation  
feels like  
in contrast

"Just so you can feel what it is like to be loose, make yourself very tight. See if you can feel the difference between the two. Make your body tight, then make it loose. Each time do it differently. Very suddenly: tight!...loose." We are going to do more of that next week."

Those who do not get the feeling of looseness and fidget restlessly at first, really let go and are much more relaxed after the experience of complete tension.

skipping:  
forward,  
backward,  
free skipping  
in any direction  
and any way

"Stand up. We are going to skip lightly right around the room and we are going to skip all the same way." The group finds its own direction in skipping even though it means that many of them have to change in order to adjust to the stronger directional feeling. "Could you possibly skip backward.. forward again... backward. Some are galloping backward. Work on it by yourselves and practice it until you know how to skip backward." The novelty of skipping backward is a real challenge to the group and they practice quite earnestly by themselves, some even going behind the piano or a table where they can practice alone. "Make a circle and skip in place." Some of the children imitate Barbara's hand clapping. Since skipping and clapping at the same time is too advanced for these children she tells them that she will do the clapping. "Skip turning around ... the other way around... around and around and around. Go anywhere in the room you want to go. You can skip turning around, go forward, backward, anyway you want, but be very careful not to bump into each other. This is really a kind of group dance. That can be a little better. Does everyone want to make it better? Then listen to me." Most of the children come close to Barbara in order to hear her but a few continue to skip independently around the room. "Instead of trying to cover lots of ground and rushing around, try doing it easily and lightly. It doesn't matter how much ground you cover as long as you skip nicely and listen to my clapping. Feel how nice it is to skip. You can swing your arms and head, anything you want to... Now skip home again to me and stop skipping." All the children gather eagerly around Barbara. "Shh, let's all sit down quietly, relax and breathe out. Just lie down and rest. Our class is over." Several groans of disappointment from the children.

relaxation

**DISCUSSION** There seemed to be no problem with this group's relationship either to the material or to Barbara. They were very enthusiastic and positive in their feeling for this new activity. They took great delight in moving creatively and were eager to go ahead and try things even before they had received full instructions. The children enjoyed thoroughly very

simple, basic movements which gave them a chance to move actively and cover the ground. The social element of dancing among friends and of making friends with Barbara was very stimulating to them, making the problem of relating themselves to other people through movement in the group dancing seem very easy and natural.

In talking about the class afterward, Barbara pointed out that there were two poles of experience which she gave them: that of having dictated to them a specific movement problem to solve, such as "move your heads in as many ways as possible", and that of free choice, being allowed to choose which part they wanted to move. This gave the children two types of security: the security of being told exactly what to do and the security of choosing according to their own feeling. She also pointed out that in this type of class there was a much greater need for free expression than for technique. The technique will evolve out of the expression as the children discover that they need to be able to move more freely. The more advanced you are in dance, the more you have need of technique to support your wider range of expression. With adults, you may use technique as a bridge since most are so far away from the ability to express themselves naturally and freely.

## THE OLDER GROUP

### Lesson III

It was a rainy, sluggish day and the campers had been closely confined to indoor space and activities for some time. When we walked into the Lodge, some of the older girls were practising social dancing to a record which blared forth from a portable victrola. Others were in scattered groups talking noisily with friends. Since the floor was unprepared for dancing, Barbara suggested that everyone help move the tables and chairs back out of the way, pick up torn papers on the floor, and turn off the victrola. Some of the girls came up and talked with Barbara before class, helping her learn some of their names, while others continued their conversations with friends, completely apathetic to the idea that dance class was about to begin. Although several of the older girls were missing, (they later tiptoed down the stairs from their rooms and crept out the door), the group was still much too large for the indoor dance space. A group of younger children sat in one corner watching, having been told they could stay if they sat quietly.

circle

The forming of a circle is accomplished very slowly and with no feeling of group unity. "Sit down. Today we are going to do something entirely different. Last week all the dancing was done alone or in couples. Today, we are going to do some group dancing. If the dancing goes along well, we can have the whole group dancing at the end. But we don't start that way. First we dance alone, then in two's, in three's, in four's."

relaxation

making the whole  
body tense  
and relaxed

"Each one find a place in the room where you can lie down on the floor not touching anyone. Lie quietly for a moment. Close your eyes. Be very soft and loose. Now, as I beat the drum, make your body gradually very tight all over until I beat it again and then you will make it suddenly loose again. Very gradually make your whole body tight all over." Giggling as she beats the drum. "Then loose again...Again make your body tight...then loose." Movements are rather half-hearted for many. They vary their movements but are not completely relaxed to start with and do not ever reach a state of extreme tension. "I don't see much difference between tight and loose in this part of the room. Each time you become tight and loose find a different position. You can even sit up or roll over onto your side or front. You will become so tight that you can't move any more. Now you

different  
patterns of  
sudden or  
gradual  
tension and  
relaxation

are so loose you can't move... You are now going to get tighter in some new, different way... and now find some other way to relax... Sit up. I would like to see you doing all sorts of things I've never seen before when you become tight and loose. A new pattern--suddenly tight and gradually loose. Don't look around you or pay attention to what anyone else is doing. You can't possibly dance when you are giggling. Some are really dancing and you will spoil it for everyone if you giggle." There is one group of younger girls which has been giggling and talking, making fun of the directions given, since the beginning of class. "A different pattern still--suddenly tight, suddenly loose. Every time do a different tight movement, not just moving with the hands, but feeling it with your whole body. Now you are going to be gradually tight and gradually loose."

in couples,  
testing for  
a feeling of  
relaxation  
and passivity

"Will everyone find a partner. I will demonstrate with Sandra," one of our observers, "what you are going to do with your partner. You are going to test her and see if she is really very loose. See if her arms are loose", pushing her arms to see if they dangle and swing loosely, picking them up gently and letting them flop back down. "See if her body is loose", pushing her gently between the shoulder blades so that her upper body drops forward, hanging loosely. "Try her head." At a slight push the head drops forward or sideward. "Take her by the hand and lead her around... in different directions, upward, down to the floor. See if you can make your partner soft and loose." Many are pulling and pushing their partners roughly without giving them clear indications of what they want them to do. Instead of helping the partner to feel relaxation by gentle testing, this has just the opposite effect. The children become very tight in order to resist their partner's roughness. "Test your partner very gently and carefully. See if you can lead her around without bumping into others." Some are pulling their partners around very fast. One girl whines, "Not so fast!"

"Look around for another partner." This results in running for their best friends and much conversation, so Barbara sits them down and demonstrates the next step with Sandra again. "Instead of touching her, I'm going to show her what I want her to do without touching, using



activity -  
passivity  
in couples  
one leading,  
one following

my arms and my whole body. You can make her go away from you, come back to you without talking at all. This is something to do just in movement without any talking." Nearly all use only their hands to direct their partner and even these almost verbal signaling gestures are very tentative as if they really don't care whether or not their follower follows them. Some of them completely escape the problem by resorting to words, "Get down, you," or "Get up". Most of them try only what few indications Barbara has given them of ways to move their partners, being neither very active nor experimental. Nor are the followers completely loose and passive. Rather than being moved by the force of their leader's movements, they move themselves or else they resist being led, challenging their partner's ability to keep hold of them and move them. "Now let the follower have a chance to lead... Everyone sit down in a circle and let's see how you are doing." Again, the girls have no sense of a circle as a unifying group form. Each group of friends sits down together where they think the circle ought to be, but as others don't sit near them, the circle is broken into fragments around the room. Two of the older girls are even more exclusive, sitting outside what circle there is and making comments on each dance until it is their chance to show what they have done. "This can be a beautiful duet if you feel it together and if the follower is really following. The follower must be soft, the leader forceful. You must have a feeling of force as you lead and push and pull. The leader can be very strong in her expression if she wants to be." With a great deal of previous help from Barbara and Sandra, most of them now seem to have a little better feeling for leading and following although they are still tentative. The group seems very absorbed in watching except for a few whispers here and there. "It is natural to want to lead with your hands, but try to feel it with your whole body. Before you start your improvisation, have just a moment of pause. Try leading sometimes fast, sometimes slowly; suddenly, gradually. This takes a great deal of concentration. Do you know what concentration means? It means thinking only about what you are doing at the moment."

"Now let's have one person leading two people."  
Barbara chooses three and puts them in the middle of the

one active,  
two passive

circle, designating one as the leader, the other two as followers. "You can lead them together or separately. Wait, I think everyone can do this at the same time. Find two people you haven't been with today and all try it." The groups of three work fairly well together except for one group in which the problem becomes distorted into a 'follow the leader' situation, the leader doing a ballet step so that her followers will be impressed with her and making them try to imitate the exact movement. One of her followers comments "that's ballet" and laughs.

one active,  
five passive

Next Barbara chooses a group of six people to work in the center of the circle, selecting an older girl to lead them. The girl is very self-conscious and afraid to start and looks toward Barbara helplessly. Barbara then leads the group of six herself demonstrating some of the possible ways of leading them. She divides the rest of the group up into groups of six, appointing leaders from within each group. In one group, the leader tries to push all of her followers around. In another group, the leader Barbara has chosen does not want to lead. She finally does a few tentative movements and seems very relieved when Barbara asks all the groups to choose another leader. Some of the followers do not get the feeling of being loose and passive, of letting another person lead them, but dance around by themselves independently of the leader and the others in the group.

Barbara active,  
whole group  
passive

"Do you want me to lead the whole group? Show that you want me to lead you by your movement. I can't lead you until you are all soft and loose." The group is so large that those on the outer fringes have trouble seeing Barbara. Nevertheless, the group as a whole responds much more to Barbara's leadership than they have to that of their fellow campers, even though some are still not in the problem and constantly giggle. The group still has no feeling for working together however. The children jostle each other when the group is in the form of a close mass; the group almost seems to resist itself from within. Barbara then leaves this problem, deciding to go on to a different type of experience.

"Let's do some galloping. Go lightly around in one direction." The feeling of release and activity in the locomotion suddenly sets the group moving wildly around

Locomotion:  
galloping  
forward,  
backward

leading with  
the left or  
right foot,  
gallop pattern  
forward and  
backward,  
changing leads

the room, going very fast and racing each other to get ahead. "Go backward, looking over your inside shoulder. Somebody left some ballet slippers in the middle of the floor. They are dangerous there. Someone might slip. We must get them out of the way." One of the girls removes them. "Do you know how to make a horse lead with the right or left side? All right, see if you can lead with your left foot...now with the right...Once with the left, once with the right." Their movements are still very violent but the discipline of the pattern is beginning to restore some group feeling. "Lead once with the left, once with the right backward...Now once forward, right leading, left leading...once backward right, left." The large amount of movement, the number of people in the small space seems to make it hard for some to get the feeling of the pattern. When Barbara has them all form a circle and do the same pattern forward in toward the center and backward away from the center, many more seem to be able to do it. Barbara further organizes the space by dividing the group in two, and forming one circle inside another. When both groups have mastered the movement fairly well, she has one group do the forward in-to-the-center part of the pattern as the other group does the backward out-from-the-center part, so that the two groups pass each other, one moving in while the other moves out.

shaking  
body parts  
to relax them

To end the class, everyone does the pattern in and out twice, all together, then all relax their bodies by shaking their legs, arms, shoulders, and flopping their backs up and down. The minute Barbara says they can sit down and rest, that the class is over, the older girls race for the victrola and put on the "Blue Tango". Somebody says, "Put on the Charleston."

**DISCUSSION** A group is a changing organism that lives and breathes a life of its own. It is not simply one individual plus another and another that makes up a class, but the relationships between individuals, and between the group, the teacher and the material, as well as many outside factors. These all interact to create the atmosphere of a particular group and a particular class with that group.

A group has a very definite mood and personality each time you work with it. Today the atmosphere was pregnant with restlessness and, at the same time, apathy and a lack of creative energy. What

were the dominant factors? Rain, yes, particularly with a camp group whose activities are pretty much curtailed by bad weather. Humidity-- something in the actual air pressure disturbed them all. Also the crowding of the large group in too small a place did not allow Barbara to encourage them to be bolder and freer. This was true particularly in the beginning when they were all working individually. Because this basic step of experiencing complete tension and complete relaxation was not taken successfully by many, the succeeding steps in experiencing tightness and looseness, forcefulness and forcelessness in relation to other people could not be completely achieved, even though Barbara tried to solve the space problem by taking one group at a time.

Perhaps another factor was the combination of ages. This has been a constant factor with this group often resulting in giggling, being silly about the movement problems presented, clinging to friends, holding oneself in reserve and resisting any group feeling.

Also, this group probably wasn't far enough along for this material. Barbara felt afterward that she had perhaps overestimated their level of creative dance development.

## THE YOUNGER GROUP

### Lesson III

The younger children had just finished their riding class and were on their way to change quickly into the shorts or bathing suits which they wore to dance class. Those children who were there early gathered around Barbara, curious to see the drum which she had brought with her today. So, while she waited for the others, she passed the drum around giving each a chance to try playing it. Some just slapped it once, others experimented with a short pattern and some used both sides of the drum, a Chinese tom-tom. They tried making different sounds with their fist or the flat of their hand and wanted to know, "How does it sound with that (a felt beater) on it?" They were very attentive to Barbara, interested and eager. One asked, "Are we going to do an Indian dance?" and another girl offered to show Barbara some camp pictures, pointing out the names of friends in the picture. All during this time the other girls had come running, one after another, to the outside dancing area, taken off their shoes and quietly joined the group. When everyone had arrived, Barbara retrieved her drum and asked each to find a place for herself. Some girls obviously wanted to go inside and many headed for a small shaded area since it was quite bright and hot out. Barbara asked them to vote on whether they would like to dance indoors or outdoors. About two-thirds of them wanted to dance inside and so we all quickly moved in and the girls found places to lie down on the floor of the Lodge.

each finding individual place, complete relaxation on the floor	"Sit down on the floor...Lie down on the floor, not touching anyone else, not touching the wall or the posts, not touching anything. Lie very quietly and loosely. We have done this once before. You close your eyes and lie quietly, your eyes loose, your mouth loose, your face loose, ...everything loose and soft, tongue hanging, cheeks soft, eyelids droopy...While I gradually beat the drum,
alternating complete tension with complete relaxation	you are going to make your whole self gradually very tight." Barbara beats a gradually increasing pulse which starts softly and slowly then grows louder and faster. "Now", (with a sudden drum beat) "let loose...When you have become very tight like that and you can't move any more, just stop moving and hold the movement...Again,
different patterns of sudden and gradual tension and relaxation	make your body tight but do it in a different way. You can stand up or sit up...and loose! You can be loose in different positions too...Now we are going to change the pattern. Make your body suddenly tight then gradually loose. Tight!...now gradually getting looser and looser... Again, tight!...and now looser and softer." All but one

of the children respond immediately to the idea of tight and loose movements and can distinguish very clearly between very tight-feeling movements and very loose-feeling ones. For most, tightness means a pulling-in of the whole body, including their faces which are tightly screwed-up and their fists which are clenched. But some feel tightness also as a taut outward stretch of the arms and the whole body. Almost all are able to be very relaxed and loose. The little girl who did not respond at first moves only slightly and watches the other children. Gradually, she too becomes absorbed in the experience and moves, as do the others, quickly and intensively with her whole body. "Stand up. A new pattern--suddenly tight and suddenly loose."

transition from  
feeling loose to  
feeling active  
and passive

"Now, without my drum, move around everywhere as loose and soft as you can possibly be. Move as if somebody were moving you, pushing you, pulling you. Maybe the wind is blowing you. It knocks you down, lifts you up. Feel as if you are a piece of wood on the water floating along." The whole group gets the feeling of passively drifting and everyone smiles with enjoyment. "Now be as tight as you can, moving around with everything tight."

in couples,  
one testing  
the other's  
relaxation

"Look around and take the nearest person to you as a partner. There is one extra." From one group, "She can come with us." "No, it is better if this is done with just two." Barbara brings in Sandra, one of our group members, and uses her to demonstrate how one tests a person to see if she is loose and relaxed, then asks her to dance with the extra girl. "Decide first who will lead. One leads and one follows. The leader tests her follower gently to see if she is very loose. Touch her, hold her, try her out, see if you can move her around and make her do different things." They decide which one will lead with very little fuss. Many different things are tried but always with the purpose of seeing if the partner is loose and floppy. One leader is very experimental and lifts and drops her partner's leg to see if it is loose as she lies on the floor. "Lead your partner gently so that she will enjoy it." One girl says to her partner in a concerned tone, "Are you enjoying it?"

"Find another partner. Take right hands. One is going

alternating  
leadership  
in couples

to lead through one movement, then it is the other's turn to lead until she has finished a movement" Barbara demonstrates again with Sandra; then everyone works at the same time for a while. "Make a circle and each couple will show its work in the center of the circle." Some couples are not very clear as to who is leading or how long she should lead, so Barbara helps them and helps the others to understand by doing quite a lot of verbal directing and analyzing as they dance. They understand very clearly what leading and following feel like but the problem of passing from one role to the other confuses them somewhat. "Lead just for one movement then stop and let the other lead." They tend to lead for more than one movement. They are also somewhat influenced by what they watched before it was their turn and they try out what others have done. A few try to shape this experience into a step pattern dance, probably a familiar duet experience for them, rather than concentrating on the feeling of acting or being acted upon.

individual  
strong and weak  
movement

"No partners now. Everybody by herself dancing with very strong movements. What we want to do is express strength." "Can we go down on the floor?" "Yes, anyway you want to do it. What is the opposite of strong?" "Weak", "Soft". "Be so weak you can hardly stand up... now strong again, very strong. Be strong again with a feeling that you are moving everything out of your way." Some act upon their neighbors when making strong movements. "This is all by yourselves."

activity-  
passivity  
without touching  
the partner

"Once more in couples with a new partner. Now decide which one is going to be strong and which one weak. The one who is strong is going to move her partner around by her own movements without touching her. Don't touch her, stay apart." Barbara demonstrates with Sandra. "Now it is the follower's turn to lead." Most seem to be interested in trying to follow their leader's directions although a few resist being led and tease their leader. "instead of in couples let's have everyone in three's. People you haven't danced with before. Now one is going to be strong, two weak." Barbara demonstrates. There are a few who resort to verbal directions so Barbara re-emphasizes that it is to be without talking. "Show them in movement... Now Sandra be the strong one and all the

same thing in  
trios: one  
active, two  
passive

one leading  
whole group  
passive

rest will be weak." The group is thrilled at the idea of being led by one of our group and cluster around her when she is going to lead them. All concentrate and participate when Sandra moves the whole group, but when she tries moving one girl separately away from the rest of the group, some of the inactive group members giggle. "Just try to feel what she wants you to do...Rest."

rolling from  
lying-on-back  
position onto  
the knees  
then rolling  
off the knees  
onto the back

"I am going to give you a nice resting movement that you will like. Lie on your backs. If you are too close to other people or the pillars you won't be able to do this movement." Barbara re-distributes those who are. "Put your arms on the floor over your head, your legs apart, soft and loose. Now roll to your right side. Do you all know which your right side is? Raise your right arm. Roll to your right side, bring your knees up to your chest and roll over onto your knees. Now we are going to start on our knees and go down. The feet are flat down on the floor, you are sitting way back on your heels; your head, arms and body are down close to the floor and everything is loose. When I say go, you are going to roll off your knees onto the floor, relaxing everything...Now roll back onto your knees and see if you can do it without using your hands...Once more onto the floor again...This would make such a nice group dance. Make a circle on your knees down close to the floor. I will start by pushing one over to the right and then one after another will roll over in succession." Most wait for Barbara to come around and push them over.

galloping  
alone and  
in couples

"Stand up. Now we are going to gallop. Let's go clockwise around the room in a nice, easy, light gallop. What has happened to our circle? We now have a big hole in it. See if you can keep the circle round as you gallop." One girl snaps at another, "Get back in your place", and pushes her. "Now let's gallop in two's. Find a partner. Everyone go around the outside of the posts. Take hands and both gallop with your right foot leading so both will be together." One girl refuses to take her partner's hand and most gallop with little feeling of moving together. "Instead of holding hands let's have the inside one put one arm around her partner's waist and take hold of her hand with the other arm. All go around together...Now each couple go once around on the inside of the circle.



shaking legs

relaxation

on floor

When the last couple gets back, all go around together once more...And stop! And come into a little closer circle." The children crowd around Barbara. "Shake out your legs because they are tight and they need to be loosened. Sit down. Lie down because we like to end our class with a rest. We did a lot of things today. Do you like to make your horses gallop? "We can't gallop but we can canter".

**DISCUSSION** This group was working more and more deeply into the problems each week. Their relationship to dancing at this point was very much through Barbara and the enjoyment of the experiences she was giving them, rather than through a feeling of group purpose and cooperation. There were often personal feelings of antagonism and competitiveness in evidence, although the atmosphere of this class, as created by Barbara, was entirely a non-competitive one. The problem of activity-passivity tried to create a feeling for cooperative and democratic give-and-take group relationships, but this problem should ideally extend over several lessons, particularly with children. It is not possible for Barbara to do more than scratch the surface of any one area because each group is able to have only four hour's experience with creative dance.

## THE OLDER GROUP

### Lesson IV

Again it was a rainy, cool day and the large older group had to have dance inside. They wandered in and sat around the edge of the room, some serious and looking forward to dance class, others already fooling, who had to be reminded by the camp director to take their shoes off and get ready for class. Since it was time to begin, Barbara decided to start the class even though some of the girls had not yet arrived.

two circles, one  
inside the other

sitting  
spine stretch

forward and  
backward head  
relaxation,  
sitting  
forward stretch

"Make a circle outside the pillars...the circle is too big...let's make an inner circle too." The director, who is watching, anxiously interrupts, wanting the girls to stay away from the corner of the room where the floor is quite splintery. "Let go of hands. Sit down with crossed legs and with your hands on your knees." Barbara is standing in the center of the circles. "Hold yourself up as tall as you can. Stretch right up through the back of your neck. Then let go and slump...Straighten up again. Close your eyes...Drop! Let your head drop forward...now straighten up, lift your chest, open your mouth, close your eyes, and let your head drop backward...then let it flop forward again...Now sit with your legs straight forward on the floor, your arms resting at your sides. Bounce down with your head toward your knees, keeping your legs on the floor and breathe out each time you bounce down."

lying down  
and curling  
up to a sitting  
position,  
foot exercises

shaking  
hands and feet,  
legs and arms

Today, from the first moment of class, most of the girls are quite responsive. The clear form of the inner and outer circle, the discipline of following explicit directions during the technical exercises makes the group concentrate well. "Put your head down on your chest and gradually lie down on the floor without using your hands, letting your head touch last...Raise your heads first and curl up to a sitting position with a round back...Lie down again...and curl up. We are going to stand up in a minute so we shall do some exercises for our feet. Stretch your toes down and now back over your shoulder. Down and back." Barbara gestures with her hands. "Now clench your fists and clench your feet. Make the soles face each other. Clench...and loose. Lift both feet in the air and shake them. Shake your hands and feet at the same time...Stand up. Shake out your legs and arms. Throw them

growling	this as a movement experience coming from the center of the body. "Growling." The children's first reaction is to growl at each other and make lots of noise but not much movement. "Show it with your whole body. All by yourself on these things. This is all preparation for working together later on, but you must be by yourself now...Hissing. Let's see it in movement, lots of dancing." Many are still making sounds at their friends, but hissing produces more movement. "Humming. Dance while you hum. You can develop your movement much more. This is a humming dance...Whistling. Whistle while you dance. All these sounds are very different so don't make the same movements for all of them. Make different movements...Clicking." Clicking and whistling produce more impersonal, abstract movement, less acting upon friends. "This is a sound that an animal makes but it isn't necessary to move like that animal: Purring. See what the sound makes you feel like doing." This is immediately associated with a cat by one group in which one girl kneeling represents a cat while others stroke her hair.
hissing	
humming	
whistling	
clicking	
purring	
each improvising a sound and a movement	"Will Sandra and Heather join us? All gather around in a circle. That's a little too close. You must always find a comfortable relationship to each other. Each one is going to come into the center and make a movement and a sound with it. I will go first. I'm not going to think about it. I'm just going to do it. All right, everybody do my movement and sound...Sandra will you do something entirely different? Everybody do Sandra's movement and sound...Next, Heather." One after another each girl makes a random movement and sound and the rest of the group repeats it. Feeling their own sounds and movements done by the entire group seems to be a new and pleasing experience. It succeeds in taking their attention off themselves and their friends and putting it on the different qualities of movement and sound. Many different sounds are experienced--whistling is popular and there are smooth sounds, sniffing sounds, shaking, floppy sounds and many others. "When somebody does a movement, really get into it, really dance it, don't just pretend. Do it just as she does. Do it with a feeling for what you are doing. That's what dancing is, not just pretending and being silly." Most do spontaneous

sounds and movements but some stop to think and one hesitates a long while. "You don't have to think too much about it. Just any old thing." Finally she uses the gallop and hop pattern that the group has done earlier and adds a "tsk" sound to it.

a short study  
of vocal sounds  
accompanying  
movement in  
groups of  
four and five

"Now I'm going to put you together in groups of four and five. Find a movement or a series of movements and find a sound that you like with it." Most groups go right to work. One group has a rather difficult time because it starts out by trying to represent dramatically two cats and two dogs in a cat and dog fight. They decide to abandon that idea only to try complicated movements which not everyone in the group can do. Talking it out only seems to confuse them more, and they are still trying verbally to decide what to do as the other groups show their studies. The group Heather is in looks to her for ideas. She suggests that they all put their heads together and breathe out simultaneously, then see what sounds and movements happen. They do this and are very pleased and astonished when they produce a unified group sinking movement accompanied by a roaring sound. From then on various other girls suggest additional movements and sounds which the group might do.

After all the dances are shown, Barbara says, "Next week is the last week. I will see you one more time." The group says, "Thank you very much" with enthusiasm and evident enjoyment on their faces as they leave. Later on, the director of the camp cancels this lesson because it conflicts with rehearsals for the Horse Show which is the major event of the camp season.

**DISCUSSION** The fourth and last lesson with this older group found them for the first time responsive to the material and beginning to have genuine movement experiences which they enjoyed because they were feeling them. However, there were still those who seemed to feel on the outside at times, and showed this by talking, wanting the security of their particular friends' attention and giggling constantly.

Barbara felt that today's lesson was successful partly because, as a result of last week's experience, she had planned her approach more carefully, expecting greater difficulty in introducing them to free sounds than she encountered. Even the weather did not prove a handicap today as it had last week.

While acting is as natural a form of expression for children as dancing, it is important that in a dance class it doesn't become an escape from the challenge of solving the dance problems in terms of pure movement. The pantomiming is discouraged so that the child will use his pure motor imagination. He should not be outside the movement, copying the outer world, but rather on the inside expressing creatively his own inner world in movement terms.

All in all, this last lesson was quite successful, both in the enjoyment of dance which was evident, and in the richness of new experiences in sound and movement which were offered and accepted by the group.

## THE YOUNGER GROUP

### Lesson IV

This time three of the girls met us at the gate and rode with us on the back of the station wagon to the Lodge. We found the Lodge floor swept and prepared for dance and the group of girls waiting. They gathered immediately around Barbara and together decided that it would be nice to dance inside today. Two of the juniors brought handfuls of field flowers to Barbara and in a very informal way she used the flowers as a bridge into new and very deeply felt dance experiences.

dancing the  
visual movement  
qualities in  
different flowers

"Did you know you can dance anything in the world? You can dance a flower." "How?" "Look at it and see the movement. Do you see any movement?" "The petals?" "Supposing there isn't any movement, how would it move if it did move?" "The wind", "By the petals". "Try it by yourself. Remember what it looks like. The petals go out in all different directions and there is a big, dark, heavy thing in the middle." The flower she is holding up is a black-eyed susan. "Would anyone particularly like to dance this flower?" Several say yes eagerly. One girl puts her hands up above her ears and wiggles her fingers gently, swaying her body from side to side, "Look at this goldenrod. It is not moving but it has a certain shape, a certain line, a certain feeling in it. Would anyone like to try that?" "I can do it", "I can, " "I can". All right, anyone who likes can try dancing this flower. No two people need to do it in exactly the same way." They dance soft, upward, detailed qualities which are not an acting out of a story about a flower but rather a sensitive feeling out of the movement qualities in the visual design, texture, color of the different flowers. Each one likes having a chance to express her own idea of how the flower would move. One dances the sideward bend of the flower, selecting a particular detail which is pleasing to her. "How would this purple spike flower make you want to move?...What other things around the room can you dance?" "The post", (the post has evergreens wrapped around it for some festive occasion), "curtains in the wind", "paper on the bulletin board". "I see all sorts of things. Suppose there were a fire in the fireplace. How would that make you want to move? You could make sounds with it too." Immediately the room is alive with movement and sound.

dancing the  
movement  
quality of fire

relaxation

free vocal  
sounds and  
movement:  
stretching  
flopping

humming  
hissing

buzzing

growling

clicking

cooing

whistling

making up  
their own free  
vocal sounds

"Now we are going to do something different. Everyone find a place and lie down without touching anyone else. It is good to be all soft when you start to dance. Close your eyes and listen while I tell you what we are going to do. We are going to make stretching movements and stretching sounds with our voices...and rest. Let's sit up. Will you use your voices in all kinds of different ways. Use your voices to make floppy sounds and use your whole bodies to make floppy movements...Stand up. Humming sounds and humming movements, humming with your sound and humming with your movement. I'm going to give you some nice sounds. Hissing sounds and hissing movements." With the previous sound qualities, most worked well and individually. However, with hissing, they run from one to the next and hiss at each other. "See if you can do this by yourself. Buzzing sounds and movements." They run around the room fast and smoothly--bzzzzzz. "It is important that we dance whatever sound I give you. Feel it with your whole body. Growling sounds and movements." They growl and run at one another. "You can find your own movements better if you are by yourself. Clicking sounds and clicking movements." One girl moves with stiff arms and legs to her clicking sounds. "All right, here's another one: cooing sounds and cooing movements...all right, rest. Each of these sounds is so different that you will make a different movement for each sound. Whistling sounds and movements. You may not be able to make whistling sounds but you can make whistling movements anyway. Rest."

"Instead of my telling you what sounds you are going to make, you are going to make up your own sounds. Make a circle inside the posts. One of you go into the center of the circle and make an interesting movement and a sound that goes with it and we will all do it." One girl growls toward the group, some of whom pretend to cower away from her. When it is the group's turn they growl back and close in on her. "That is not quite what I meant. We are going to stay right where we are and not move toward her but stay in our place in the circle and make movements and sounds. Each one is going to do something different, maybe something we haven't had before, something you just make up." The circle is too small. "We don't have enough room...Move back and

find some movement and sound that is all your own. You don't have to think about it, just dance it." One girl says, "I have the sound but I don't have the movement. I'll make buzzing sounds"--two others have made this sound before her. "I think we need a little help here, Sandra and Heather will you join us and I will be the first one in the middle. I think we need a little more variety. I'll just make up the first movement and sound that comes to me. I don't even know what I'm going to do yet... Sandra, do something entirely different...Heather, something still different." As the other girls each make a sound, they still seem very much hampered by the qualities which Barbara has previously dictated and by a need to imitate what the others have done. There follow several more buzzing sounds and similar movements. "Gigi, we had some buzzing before. Do you think you could make up something different?" Gigi hesitates and then says, "I can't think of any". "I'm going to have you each go off and make up a sound and movement and then we will see everyone's." They all go off and Gigi comes back with a whinnying sound and bucking, horse-like movements. The next three girls do the same thing, having gotten away from the idea of exploring for new qualities of sound and into familiar and very enjoyable playing-horse territory. Everyone seems to have had her turn, but there is an argument about whether one girl has had a chance yet. They finally decide that she hasn't and she too does a whinnying sound and horse movements.

sound patterns  
made with hands  
feet sounds

"Let's make sounds with our hands on the floor and on ourselves. Stand up. Use your hands and see if you can make this pattern." Barbara demonstrates a sound and movement pattern and they really concentrate quite hard on learning it. "Now all of you go off and practise a different pattern. You can do it down on the floor, up in the air...Let's see them." One does a pattern hitting her thighs and the floor and clapping her hands; many do ones like that but with variations of the time and force patterns. Others clap their head or arms and skip and jump.

"Do we have time to do some group dances?" One of our group who has a watch says, "Yes." "Stay right



trios using  
movement and  
sounds of  
hands and feet

where you are," as friends start inching toward each other, "and I will put you in groups of three. Use anything--hands, feet, voice to make a pattern. Listen just a moment. I'll tell you how to do this." Some of the girls start verbally planning what to do and telling each other what they should do. "We haven't learned how to do this well yet. When we work together in three's, all of us make the dance, not one telling the others what to do. This has to do with sound--voices, hands, feet. Let's have a lot of sound." There is more talking and arguing than creative exploration of sounds. "Where's the sound? Let's hear it." One group gets diverted into jumping over each other's backs and one member goes to Barbara, telling her that they are having trouble. Barbara brings in Heather and Sandra and tells the group to start over, to be very simple and try to find just one movement and sound. "Now we are going to show the dances." The group spontaneously makes a circle to watch the dances. The trios use clapping and stamping sounds and have a good feeling for the group of three, but none uses voice sounds. "You will learn to be a better audience. Don't talk and giggle but watch very quietly." Each group shows its dance twice. "That's all for today, next week will be the last time." Everybody disappointedly: "Oh", "Next week the last time?". Barbara says, "Do you like your dancing?" Everyone eagerly: "Yes!"

**DISCUSSION** Barbara felt, as we talked over the lesson in the car coming back, that the animal sounds (growling, hissing, etc.,) put the children on the wrong track, and that she should have given them more abstract sounds like clicking. Because of this experience with conventional animal sounds, they were mis-led in a representational animal direction instead of being given complete freedom to experiment with their tongue, lips, teeth, voice as children often do with great imagination and enjoyment.

This was a group whose life centered around one consuming interest--horses, so that they were all easily carried away by the idea of whinnying and neighing. If it had been a group of children with diverse interests and experiences, there might have been more variety in their sounds and they might have stimulated each others' imagination to a greater extent. This experience did not succeed in opening up the door to their purely auditory imagination because the animal sounds were representational and imitative. Barbara also felt that she might possibly have produced more successful results if, instead of giving them words denoting a particular kind of sound,

she had made some sounds herself and had them all try them , then experiment further by themselves. The two problems of free vocal sounds, and sounds of hands and feet, were only an introduction to the area of sound and movement. This area can be developed in many ways, for example, by having the children discover objects in the (indoor or outdoor) environment which make interesting sounds (shoes beaten together, rustling paper, sticks, stones, etc), or by supplying them with traditional instruments (drums, shakers, bells, etc.) to accompany themselves and each other.

This group was just beginning to take a very positive shape in relation to the material and to Barbara. She felt that, if she could have had them longer, they would have done some very creative work, since they had made a good start in this direction.

SUMMARY OF TEACHING MATERIAL  
USED IN THE MEADOWBROOK LESSONS

Exercises marked with an asterisk (\*) were not used in these lessons but represent possible further developments of the themes.

FREE EXPRESSION

FREE MOVEMENT OF THE WHOLE BODY

- Lying
- Sitting \*
- Standing \*
- Moving from place to place \*

EXPRESSIVE USE OF SEPARATE BODY PARTS

Individual Movement

- Head
- Shoulders
- Elbows
- Wrists
- Fingers
- Knees \*
- Ankles \*
- Toes \*
- Trunk
- Combinations
- Whole Body

Group Movement

- Head Duets
- Arm Trios
- Leg Quartets \*

QUALITIES OF MOVEMENT

Pure Force Qualities

- strong, weak
- sudden, gradual (jerky, smooth)

Pure Time Qualities

- slow, fast
- regular, irregular \*

Pure Space Qualities

- large, small
- high, low
- forward, backward, sideward
- curved \*, straight \*

Other Qualities

- heavy, light
- hard, soft

## FREE EXPRESSION (continued)

### TENSION-RELAXATION: ACTIVITY-PASSIVITY

#### Individual Movement

- alternating tension and relaxation
  - gradual tension - sudden relaxation
  - sudden tension - gradual relaxation
  - sudden tension - sudden relaxation
  - gradual tension - gradual relaxation
- strong and weak movement

#### Group Movement

- activity-passivity
  - one active, one passive
  - one active, two passive
  - one active, whole group passive
  - other relationships of individual and group \*

### MOVEMENT AND SOUND

#### Vocal Sounds

- stretching
- flopping
- collapsing
- sighing \*
- groaning
- grunting
- growling
- hissing
- humming
- buzzing
- purring
- cooing
- clicking
- whistling
- free sounds

#### Sounds of Hands and Feet

- clapping, stamping, etc. on floor, walls, body

### MOVEMENT AND SIGHT

#### Design in Everyday Things expressed through Movement

- flag
- cloud
- flower
- fire
- etc.

## BASIC MOVEMENTS

### IN ONE PLACE

#### STRETCHING

- free stretching movements
- upward arm and body stretch with relaxed drop
- sitting forward stretch

#### RELAXING

- free flopping movements
- rest positions
  - lying on back, side, front
  - sitting
  - standing \*
- relaxed drop from upward stretch
- relaxed roll-over from low kneeling position
- shaking arms, hands, shoulders, legs, feet
- flopping back up and down

#### SWINGING

- free swinging movements
- backward-forward arm and body swing

#### SPRINGING

- free springing movements\*
- small knee bounce
- jumping

#### MOVEMENTS FOR SEPARATE BODY PARTS

##### Head

- relax forward and backward

##### Shoulders

- up-down

##### Arms

- relax: shake

##### Hands

- open-close (stretch fingers wide then clench fists)
- relax: shake

##### Feet

- ankles: stretch-bend
- clench-relax
- together-apart (semi-circle)
- relax: shake

##### Legs

- relax: shake

##### Back

- sitting spine stretch
- kneeling hollow-round back

##### Trunk

- lie-back and curl-up
- relaxed flop up and down

## BASIC MOVEMENTS (continued)

### FROM PLACE TO PLACE

#### WALKING

- free walking movements
- various qualities (see Free Expression: Qualities)
- forward, backward, sideward

#### RUNNING

- free running movements
- forward, backward, sideward

#### SKIPPING

- free skipping movements
- forward, backward, sideward \*, in place, turning around
- alternate with galloping

#### GALLOPING

- free galloping movements \*
- forward, backward, sideward
- right or left foot lead
- in couples
  - side by side
  - opposite in circle
- sideward gallop pattern: change direction after 8, 4, 2 beats
- "gallop-and-hop" pattern: alternate right and left
  - sideward foot lead
  - forward
  - backward
  - combinations
- alternate with skipping

#### CRAWLING (forward, backward)

- hands and knees
- hands and feet

#### ROLLING

#### UNUSUAL FORMS OF LOCOMOTION

- "walking sitting down"
- "upside-down hands and feet walk" (stomach up, from sitting position)

